

## BLIND TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES

February 26, 2003

### I. Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to pass on accepting the minutes from the last meeting.

### II. Review of Agenda:

Agenda was approved as corrected.

### III. Financial Update—Teresa Tometich

Based upon a House Budget Committee proposal, funding has been cut in half for 2004. All funding for the Blind Summit has been suspended for FY2004 (summit for June 2003 is cancelled). It is not possible to use 2003 funds for the June 2003 summit. Cancellation notices should be drafted. A vision summit planning committee will discuss this. The two blindness skills specialists should remain on the committee. It was stressed that none of this is a “done deal”, and professional development funds may not be cut.

The task force may have to depend solely on the Blind Task Force funding. The funding chart passed out at the last meeting is exactly the same. The cover letter for the contract proposal says that top priority will be given to the proposals that focus on the top two need areas.

### IV. Presentation:

Grenetha Baldwin was presented with a plaque praising her work as Task Force Chairperson during the past year.

### V. Legislative Update-Sheila Wright

Blind literacy funds have not been cut from the House appropriations committee. People were very interested in the Blind Skills Specialist positions. There are some new legislators that believe blind literacy is important. The Senate level will need some concentration. The Instructional Materials Accessibility Act has been reintroduced this week. Senator Talent will be an original sponsor of the bill. It was requested that a thank-you note be sent to his office for sponsoring the bill.

### VI. National Agenda Update-Corinne Harmon

There are no meeting minutes from the meeting held in California. Corinne will send the minutes when she receives them. Budget crunches are happening in all states.

### VII. Vision Summit Planning Committee Update

There is currently \$92,151 in the budget—two blind skills specialists, task force meetings, literacy survey. \$30,000 was spent on the complete study last year. The Dec. 22 report has not changed. It takes much less operating money for the task force to meet this year than in previous years. The task force is now required to meet in free meeting rooms. \$2,000 represents all the meetings held thus far (June 24, Sept. 10, and Dec. 12—approximately \$1,000 per meeting. This includes mileage and catering. Mileage is the major cost. Carpooling would also cut costs. It was suggested that teleconferencing be utilized. The Office of Administration Videoconferencing Service may be utilized. The bylaws state that the task force needs to meet four times per year. Liquids only will be served in the morning. Blind Skills Specialists (\$70,000) need to be funded, and Teresa asked for suggestions on how to do this. Contracts will need to be written more specifically. The PDC cut from 1% to ½% has not been seen by anyone on television or radio. Teresa suggested that Sheila discuss the professional development funding with Melodie before going to the legislature. A lot of money will be left at the end of this year. Professional development money will still be used for the blind skills specialists for this year.

The annual; literacy study must be conducted according to the bylaws. One more task force meeting will be held on May 7.

Ideas to use the unencumbered \$59,000 included assistive technology equipment and consultation. Debbi suggested that the success of VI reimbursement should be discussed before deciding on how to spend the funds. Teresa will check with Rick about this and e-mail the group next week. Orientation and Mobility consultation will be the second priority. Computer games for students with visual impairments was also discussed. Literacy and vocational performance needs to be included in the games. David Baker should be contacted regarding copyright, etc.

A motion was made to use this year's unencumbered funds for blind students in the state of Missouri for assistive technology. All accepted the motion. The main priority is the blind skills specialist funding but at the same time we want to make sure that funding is going to the kids.

\$92,000 new budget beginning July  
\$70,000 blind skills specialist  
\$6,000 for literacy study  
\$4,000 for meetings

\$18,000 balance (the study costs will be discussed at the May meeting)

There is a bill that would provide family training funds for parent support groups, etc. DESE has provided funds for pre- and post-conference meetings in the past. It must be long-term research-based work that the blind skills specialists do. Discussion took place regarding if all of the funds should be used for assistive technology or for parent scholarships to attend the Power-Up conference April 7-8. Sheila made a motion to set aside funds for Power-Up registration for 10 parents (\$100 per person--\$1,000 total). This motion was passed unanimously.

Teresa will share the Students With Disabilities Preparing for Post-Secondary Education booklet with John Bamberg at DESE.

#### VIII. Blind Skills Specialist Update-Teresa Tometich

The Blind Skills specialists are working well. Teresa suggested that the group not discuss the professional development cuts until tomorrow. Teresa will e-mail a copy of Pam's midyear report and will try to get it into electronic format.

#### IX. Summit copy Responsibilities-Teresa

Melodie is working with RSB regarding meeting preparation responsibilities. The law specifically state that RSB and DESE are equally responsible. Everything over \$3,000 has to be bid out.

#### X. Study Matrix-Joe Sartorius

Teresa stated that Rick typed in data elements from an old study and typed in statute requirements. The studies that have been done so far haven't included a trend. Changes are gradual and indiscreet. Rick suggested doing the pieces and breaking it out over a five year period. Collecting new data is time-consuming. None of the previous studies are on the web due to their size. The bid needs to include needed skills and specificity as to what is needed. The bid will go out in June. Technology data needs to include students exiting school, etc., as an agency's normal operating procedure. Rick asked Brian Forney at APH about collecting data for item 10. Every blind child is not necessarily on the APH list since it is left to individual districts to put them on. Teresa will have a discussion with Mary Cory and provide an answer to the rest of the group. She believes that this is an accurate count by the federal government. The blind skills specialists' reports are tied to their contracts. When the contract proposal is written, it should be tied more to the results of the blind task force study. RSB annual report had 343 reports for the state of Missouri.

Paul did four data elements, one of which required extra data collection. For this year he only has three, and one is being collected. Number of certified TVI's in the state (#13) should be included in all reports. It was agreed that #13 become an "all years' item.

A motion was made to have a sub-committee review the reports and decide what exactly should be included in the matrix. A final decision will be made at the May meeting. The sub-committee will have their findings by then. The motion was accepted 9-0. Cindy, Debbi, Grenetha, and Sheila will be on the sub-committee.

#### XI. Additional Announcements

Betty Davidson is now the Deputy Director of RSB.

Corinne Harmon has resigned as MSB Superintendent as of June 15, 2003.

The next meeting of the Blind Task Force will be held on May 7, 2003 at the NEA Office Building in Jefferson City from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.. Directions will be sent to all task force members.

Teresa will send the budget page for the blind skills specialists and the meeting costs breakdown.

Donna Borgmeyer will be a parent representative on the Blind task force.

Roselie Backer will send information to committee members about the Benetech Bookshare program.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m. after members present approved the tentative agenda for the May meeting. Items slated for discussion included the following:

- Approval of minutes
- Review agenda
- Current issues
- Legislative update
- National Agenda update
- Financial update
- Blind Skills Specialists Report
- Recommendations for Study Matrix